

A Multivoiced and Dialogical Self and the Challenge of Social Power in a Globalizing World

HUBERT J. M. HERMANS

In a review of the history of globalization, Scheuerman (2010) notes that although the term *globalization* has become commonplace only in the last half of the twentieth century, intellectual discourse has been replete with allusions to phenomena akin to globalization since the advent of industrial capitalism. Philosophers and social commentators of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries observed that experiences of distance and space are radically transformed by the emergence of high-speed forms of transportation and communication, which dramatically enhanced the possibilities for human interaction across existing geographical and political divides.

The resulting compression of space was well articulated in 1839 by an English journalist, who commented on the implications of rail travel by assuming that as distance was “annihilated, the surface of our country would, as it were, shrivel in size until it became not much bigger than one immense city” (Harvey, 1996, p. 242; quoted by Scheuerman). In a more poetic way, Heinrich Heine, the German-Jewish poet who spent the last twenty-five years of his life in Paris, noted: “Space is killed by the railways. I feel as if the mountains and forests of all countries were advancing on Paris. Even now, I can smell the German linden trees; the North Sea’s breakers are rolling against my door” (Schivelbusch, 1978, p. 34, quoted by Scheuerman).

However, many commentators will argue that globalization already started long before the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and can be seen as one of its later culminations. A (very) long-term view on globalization could refer to a wide variety of historical developments, such as the early spread of Buddhism over large parts of Asia that started several centuries before Christ, the expansion of Islam from the Western Mediterranean to India during 650–850, the rise of Genghis Khan and the creation of long-distance routes across Eurasia in the period 1100–1200, Columbus’s travel to the West and da Gama’s travel to the East in the “age of discovery” (fifteenth

to seventeenth centuries), inaugurating an age of European overseas empires. Many other and later expansions and their corresponding economic, commercial, military, religious, and ideological developments can be listed.¹

Apparently it is possible to take a short-term or long-term perspective on globalization, each of which leads to its specific sources of information. Irrespective of this historical diversity, it is evident that, in the present era, we are living in an age of *accelerating* globalization. We live in an increasingly interconnected world society in which the idea of separate, internally coherent, and stable cultures becomes increasingly irrelevant. The increasing “compression” of the world-space is drawing people from different cultural origins into close relationships, as can be seen, for example, in the expansion of tourism as the biggest industry in the world, the emergence of new geographical unities (e.g., the European Community, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the unification of South American countries in Mercosur), the flourishing of multinational corporations, the widespread dissemination of pop culture, the growing number of international educational institutions, the increasing flow of migrations, the growth of diasporas, the explosion of Internet communities, and the creation of global institutions (e.g., the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations). The increasing compression of our life space coexists with an unprecedented worldwide interconnectedness as exemplified by the increasing impact of new technologies that lead to intensified communication and media exposure. Technological innovations such as e-mail, SMS, iPhones, iPads, Skype, and other devices result in the decrease or even removal of spatial distances.

The long list of border crossings and transnational contacts could easily and erroneously suggest that globalization, with its enlarged array of communication possibilities, would naturally lead to a “communicative Walhalla” in which unlimited knowledge and information leads to the welfare and well-being of everybody. Such a naive form of “global optimism” would reflect a form of ignorance about what could be called the crucial problem of our time, which can be succinctly formulated by the question: How can individuals and groups, who are more and more brought together in the *compressed* space of a globalizing society, find an answer to their apparent *differences*, as originating from their different cultural backgrounds and different historical circumstances? Can people deal with each other and with themselves when they are living in the *same* space, where

¹ Retrieved from: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~dludden/globali.htm>, (Accessed February 2011).

they are so nearby or even close together, that they can no longer avoid being confronted with their apparent *heterogeneity*? It is this question that we explore in this chapter.

More specifically, my purpose is to link the social processes taking place *between* individuals to the “social” processes *within* the self. I interconnect society (between people) and the self (within people) by considering the self (or identity) as a “society of mind,” as proposed by Dialogical Self Theory (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). One of the central tenets of this theory is that what happens between people also takes place within the (semipermeable) boundaries of a multivoiced self. Apparently, people negotiate with each other, but they are also able to negotiate with themselves; they can criticize each other but also criticize themselves; they can consult each other but also themselves; they are able to love or hate each other but they can also love or hate themselves. This exploration is based on the assumption that that they can deal with the differences between each other better if they are able to deal with the differences within themselves. Along these lines, I explore the possibilities of dialogical relationships that individuals and groups, as members of a globalizing society, develop with each other, with special attention to the possibilities of entertaining dialogical relationships with themselves. To put it briefly, when it is worthy to work on a more dialogical world, it is equally worthy to work on a dialogical self. In this chapter, I explore not only the prospects of internal and external dialogical relationships but also their constraints. By considering the constraints and limitations of dialogue, we know better under which conditions dialogue is changing into monologue and vice versa. Just as we can learn more about our freedom by investigating the factors that determine us, we can better evaluate the possibilities of dialogue when we know the nature of monologue.

GLOBAL–LOCAL DIALECTICS

As Featherstone and Lash (1995) argue, two main contestants can be distinguished in the early globalization debates: “homogenizers” (e.g., Giddens, 1990), who consider globalization as a consequence of modernity, and “heterogenizers” (e.g., Said, 1978), who see globalization as a feature of postmodernity. Whereas homogenizers are searching primarily for the presence of universals, heterogenizers tend to dispute the validity of universals and question the existence of a unified world system. As long as there was a dominance of the “West over the Rest,” they considered it as simply one particular system over another system or, in other words, as the dominance of one locality

over another. In agreement with the heterogenizers' point of view, the process of globalization can be analyzed properly only when its counterpart, localization, is taken into account. As part of an accelerating process of globalization, different local cultures, with their own histories, traditions, and value systems, are getting in touch with each other and, as a consequence, become involved in a variety of relationships, including a power relationship as one of the most decisive ones. As the work of Foucault (1980) has demonstrated, heterogenizers are highly skeptical about the existence of universal truth, one of the favorite assumptions of a modernist world view. They see truth not as a something objective, which is there to be discovered by a detached observer, but as "defined truth," context-dependent and historically bound, with a particular individual, group, or institution as having the power to define what is "true" and what is not. Depending on their position in society, the power-holders not only define what is the proper or "right" definition, but also impose this definition on others. A speaking example of a heterogeneous world with power relationships between different cultures is immigration, which leads to a situation in which newcomers are challenged to maintain, defend, or redefine the culture of their original locality against the dominant definitions of the host culture.

The Coexistence of Globalization and Localization

The idea that the global and the local are not mutually exclusive but rather coexistent can also be found in discussions of the process of civilization. Wilkinson (1995), for example, proposed that on earth only one civilization exists: a single, global civilization. This civilization has its origin about 1500 BC in the Near East, when Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations collided and fused. In this very long-term conception of globalization, the original civilization has since then expanded over the entire planet and absorbed all other civilizations that were previously independent (e.g., Japanese, Chinese, and the West). To underscore the coexistence of globalization and localization, Wilkinson proposes a transactional definition of civilization and considers connectedness rather than uniformity as the main criterion for placing the local in the context of the global. When people interact intensely, significantly, and continuously, he reasons, they belong to the same civilization, "even if their cultures are very dissimilar and their interactions mostly hostile" (Wilkinson, 1995, p. 47). Indeed, when there is conflict, hostility, and even warfare, the contestants and opponents can no longer live in total isolation. Forms of antagonistic bonding can be observed in religious and social conflicts and are even expressed in language

itself. Words such as “contradiction,” “argument,” “disagreement,” “drama,” “dissonance,” “collision,” “war,” and “social power” assume the existence of entities that consist of oppositions between persons, groups, ideas, and desires: “Israel and Judah, the Homeric pantheon, Congress, counterraiding tribes, the two-party system, the Seven Against Thebes, a Punch and Judy show, and the Hitler–Stalin pact are all antagonistic couples and collections of separate entities commonly recognized as internally antagonistic unities” (Wilkinson, 1995: 48–9). Such antagonistic unities exist and develop as continuous processes of positioning and counter-positioning in relationships that are fused with social power.

Globalization and Dialogue

So, instead of considering globalization as a process of increasing uniformity, it makes sense to see it as an intense interconnection of the global and the local with increasing contact zones between different local cultures (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). Similarly, civilization is not to be understood in terms of increasing homogenization, but rather as a process in which different or even antagonistic cultural groups are meeting each other or confronting each other as part of an interconnected world society. Instead of giving up their differences and specific value systems, cultural groups are becoming increasingly aware of their specific traditions and value systems and, as an expression of their localizing tendencies, are motivated to articulate, preserve, or even defend them. Even *if* one would see, in the speedy spread of communication technology across countries and cultures, a tendency toward homogeneity and uniformity, such devices do not take away that they provide the users adequate means to express and communicate their specific identities, values, and cherished traditions.

Seeing globalization and civilization as processes that increasingly take place at contact zones where differences meet each other has at least two far-reaching implications. First, as part of one encompassing civilization and as participating in a process of boundary-crossing globalization, *different* groups and cultures – intensely interconnected as they are by growing international contacts and transnational institutions, modern technology, media, and transportation as never before – can no longer avoid the necessity of *dialogue*. When different individuals, groups, and cultures belong, more than ever, to an intensely interconnected world system, there must be a form of interaction that enables individuals and groups to deal with their differences, conflicts, and misunderstandings. Second, the global–local dynamics and civilization as consisting of differentiated and antagonistic

unities recognizes the important role of *social power* in intercultural and intergroup relationships, as exemplified by economic exploitation of the natural resources of local communities, forms of capitalistic and economic exploitation, discrimination of immigrant groups, and the emergence of dual economies and digital divides (Stiglitz, 2002). In such contexts the less powerful groups are seen as inferior or serviceable and their voices are neglected or even silenced. Where inequality, suppression, and injustice reign, monological relationships prevent the less privileged individuals and groups to articulate and communicate their experiences from their own specific point of view. In light of these considerations, the difference between dialogical and monological relationships is a point of attention in the present chapter.

SELF AS A SOCIETY OF MIND

Central to the present chapter is the view that not only different cultural groups are involved in a process of globalization, but also the internal dynamics of the self of the individual person is part of this (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). When society is globalizing, the self is too. When society is becoming more complex, the self, as an intrinsic part of society, is reflecting this complexity and is challenged to give an *answer*. Stronger, we conceive of the self as a “society of mind” (see also Minsky, 1985), which, at the same time, functions as part of the society at large and changes together with it.² Society, from its side, is not “surrounding” the self as an external “determinant,” but is a society-of-selves, to which the self gives its original contribution, as Mead (1934) already argued in his classic work *Mind, Self and Society*. An important consequence of this view is that changes and developments in the self lead to changes and developments in society at large and reversed. In other words, self and society are not mutually exclusive but inclusive (Hermans, 2001). The advantage of this view is that it avoids the pitfall of treating the self as individualized and self-contained

² Computer scientist Minsky (1985) developed a model in which the mind is considered a hierarchically organized network of interconnected parts that together function as a “society.” There is, however, an important difference between Minsky’s conception and Dialogical Self Theory. Whereas Minsky uses “society” as a metaphor for the internal functioning of the mind in the context of artificial intelligence, DST is focused on the self as functioning as part of the society at large, as exemplified by the processes of globalization and localization. Moreover, DST sees the self as emerging from historical processes (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010, chapters 1 and 2).

(Sampson, 1985; Valsiner, 2002), and society and culture as abstract and self-less (Shweder, 1991).

Dominance and Social Power

Many contemporary theories of the self, although they increasingly acknowledge multiplicity and differences as its intrinsic features, often lack insight in the power structures of the society at large on the one hand, and, correspondingly, in the “mini-society” of the self. In a critical discussion of the literature on the self, sociologist Callero (2003) listed a number of concepts that are of central concern to mainstream psychology, such as self-enhancement, self-consistency, self-monitoring, self-efficacy, self-presentation, self-verification, self-knowledge, self-regulation, self-control, self-handicapping, and self-deception. In his comment on these concepts, he raises the issue of social power:

... the self that is socially constructed is never a bounded quality of the individual or a simple expression of psychological characteristics; it is a fundamentally social phenomenon, where concepts, images, and understandings are deeply determined by relations of power. Where these principles are ignored or rejected, the self is often conceptualized as a vessel for storing all the particulars of the person.” (Callero, 2003, p. 127).

In apparent contrast to theories built on the notion of self-contained individualism, dialogical views on the self acknowledge that social power and dominance play a role in everyday life. Instead of alien to dialogue, dominance and social power are intrinsic features of it, as the following analyses will show.

Collective Voices Speak through Individual Voices

At first sight, one may assume that the dialogical intentions of the self are expressed by an individual voice that emanates from an individual self (“I am speaking”). However, for a proper understanding of the self as participating in a broader societal context, this view would be essentially incomplete. For recognizing the impact of power differences in society and in the mini-society of the self, the notion of *collective* voice is indispensable. As Bakhtin (1986) proposed, an individual speaker’s utterance is not simply emanating from an isolated, decontextualized voice speaking in a neutral space. Rather, individual voices are deeply penetrated by the value systems of institutions, groups, and communities in which they participate.

Collective voices – as manifested in professional jargon and as expressed by authorities, social circles, dialects, national languages, and social expectations – partly determine what an individual voice is saying. An important consequence of this view is that power differences between the collective voices of a particular community appear as power differences or struggles between positions in the self.

An illustrative example of power struggles between collective voices and their influence on individual voices is provided by the postcolonialist writer Edward Said (1999). He was born as a Palestinian, received his education in an English school in Egypt, and later immigrated to the United States (for extensive discussion, see Bhatia, 2002). The British staff who were running the colonial school in Egypt where Said received his training viewed the Arab boys as similar to delinquents who needed discipline and punishment. The teachers made use of a handbook with rules that were intended to educate the Arab students so that they would become like the British. Said describes how the boys resisted the rules of the handbook by invoking, in their selves, an Arab counter-position:

Rule 1 stated categorically: “English is the language of the school. Anyone caught speaking other languages will be severely punished.” So Arabic became our haven, a criminalized discourse where we took refuge from the world of masters and complicit prefects and anglicized older boys who lorded it over us as enforcers of the hierarchy and its rules. Because of Rule 1 we spoke more, rather than less, Arabic, as an act of defiance against what seemed then, and seems even more so now, an arbitrary, ludicrously gratuitous symbol of their power. (Bhatia, 2002, p. 184)

As this quotation suggests, power struggles between collective voices on the level of the institution have their impact on the selves of the members of a minority group and lead to opposing positions in the self (“I as an Arabic” vs. “I as educated in an English school”). As a result of the hard discipline imposed by the colonial staff, the Arab position in the self of the boys was not simply repressed but rather emphasized as a counter-position that had to be defended and maintained in the service of the continuity of the pupils’ selves.

Dialogue and Dominance

Dialogue is often, implicitly or explicitly, understood in contrast to dominance or social power. A closer look, however, shows that turn-taking dialogue includes, and even needs, relative dominance of the speakers involved. As Linell (1990) argued, there is asymmetry between the speakers

in *each* individual act–response sequence. When speakers are involved in a process of turn-taking, they can communicate in comprehensible ways only if they have a chance to take initiatives and display their own point of view. The actors continually alternate the roles of speaker and listener. As speakers they are more dominating and as listeners less dominating in determining the content and course of the conversation. The parties have several possibilities to control the “territory” of exchange. One of the participants can be more dominant by just speaking more than the other participant (amount of talk), or may take the most initiatory moves (interactional dominance), introduce new topics or new perspectives on topics (topic dominance), or take the most strategic moves (strategic dominance). As these examples show, relative dominance is not alien to dialogue, but rather an intrinsic feature of turn-taking behavior. It is necessary for of a well-ordered verbal or nonverbal dialogue that requires a certain degree of organization. Moreover, there is, on the content level, a very simple reason why dominance is a feature of dialogical communication: one person knows more about a particular topic or has more experience in a particular field and, as a result, has more influence on the conversation when such a topic is discussed.

The Dialogical Self as a Dynamic Multiplicity of *I*-Positions

Along the lines described in the preceding sections, we have proposed the composite concept of “dialogical self” (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010; Hermans, Kempen, & Van Loon, 2002;). In this concept, two basic terms, self and dialogue, that are usually seen as originating from different psychological or philosophical traditions are brought together in a new and fertile conceptual combination. The self has strong historical roots in American pragmatism, represented by theorists such as William James, George H. Mead, and Charles Pierce, while dialogue is a central concept in the writings of influential figures in European traditions, such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Martin Buber.

Traditionally, self and dialogue are concepts that are seen as representing opposites on the internal–external axis. Whereas the self is considered, at least in Western traditions, as a reflexive concept that refers to processes that happen “internally,” that is, *within* the person, dialogue is typically taking place “externally,” that is, *between* the person and the other. By bridging the two concepts in the “dialogical self,” the between is interiorized into the within and, in reverse, the within infuses the between. As a consequence, the self does not have an existence separate from society but becomes, as

a “society of mind,” deeply contextualized in the society at large. In this way, we try to escape any antinomy or separation between self and society. Dialogical relationships, like monological ones, can take place both in society and in the self.

Briefly stated, the dialogical self can be conceived of as a *dynamic multiplicity of I-positions*. As a “mini-society” the self emerges from its intrinsic contact with the (social) environment and is bound to particular positions in time and space. As a spatiotemporal phenomenon, the embodied *I* has the possibility to move from one position to another in accordance with changes in situation and time. Involved in processes of positioning, repositioning, and counter-positioning, the *I* fluctuates among different and even opposed positions (both *within* the self and *between* self and perceived or imagined others) and these positions are involved in relationships of dominance and social power. As part of sign-mediated social relationships, positions can be voiced so that dialogical relations among them can develop. The voices behave like interacting characters in a story or movie, involved in processes of question and answer, agreement and disagreement, conflicts and struggles, negotiations and integrations. Each of them has a story to tell about their own experiences from their own perspective. As different voices, these characters exchange knowledge and information about their respective Me’s, creating a complex, multivoiced, narratively structured self.

The central notion of Dialogical Self Theory, *I*-position, acknowledges both the multiplicity of the self and its coherence and unity. Subjected to changes in time and space, the self is intrinsically involved in a process of positioning, repositioning, and counter-positioning. As such it is distributed by a wide variety of existing, new, and possible positions (decentering movements). At the same time, the *I* appropriates some of them and rejects others (see also James, 1890). In this way, the self is involved in a process of organizing positions as parts of a coherent structure (centering movements). The “appropriated” parts are experienced as “belonging to me” or as “mine.” They are experienced as belonging to the internal domain of the self (e.g., I as father, I as teacher, I as discriminated) or to the external or extended domain of the self (e.g., my father, my mother, my teacher, my colleague, the group to which I belong). This organization and stabilization guarantees a certain degree of coherence and continuity in the self.

A central point in the theory is that the self has the potential to process *I*-positions in dialogical or monological ways. By placing *I*-positions in a dialogical framework and elaborating on them in “dialogical spaces,” both within and between selves, they are “lifted up” to the level of mutual enrichment and alterity. As part of dialogical relations, *I*-positions are

recognized in their autonomy and are allowed to speak with their own voice. This applies both to internal and external positions. As part of this polyphony of voices, the other person is considered as “another *I*,” that is, as an *I*-position in the extended domain of the self. When the positions are allowed to express themselves from their own specific points of view, they are respected as dialogical partners in the “democracy” of the self (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010).

When speaking about internal and external dialogues, we should take into account that there are also differences between them. The internal ones are typically less systematic, less organized, more abbreviated, and more impulsive than external dialogues. In a thorough discussion of “inner speech,” Wiley (2006) observed that this form of speech is both simpler and more complex than outer speech. It is simpler in both semantics and syntax, using fewer words and fewer parts of speech, and making more jumps from the one part to another. On the other hand, inner speech incorporates many extralinguistic elements – visual imagery; tactile sensations; emotions; kinesthetics; and even smells, tastes, and sounds – which make it more complex than outer speech.

However, despite significant differences between internal and external dialogues, there is a basic similarity in that voices play a constitutive role in both of them. Voices are basic in both external and internal dialogue (although it is important to note that there are also forms of nonverbal dialogue or encounter; see Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). And in the self as a society, one voice may be stronger, louder, and more influential than another. Like external voices, internal ones may be silenced, suppressed, or marginalized.

Globalization and Identity Confusion

Given the basic similarity of self and society, the complexity that results from globalization is reflected *in* the self. The contemporary self is confronted with an increasing density and heterogeneity of positions in the self and, consequently, has to face the experience of uncertainty (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Focusing on the psychology of globalization, Arnett (2002) noted that adolescents and adults increasingly have to face the challenge of adapting not only to their local culture but also to the global society. As a consequence of globalization, many people develop bicultural or multicultural identities. Whereas part of their identity is rooted in their local culture, another part is attuned to the global situation. Or, they develop hybrid identities, successfully combining elements of global

and local situations in a mix. However, Arnett presents data that show that many youngsters, particularly those in non-Western cultures, experience forms of “identity confusion.” As their local cultures are challenged and changed as a result of globalization, they are living in different “worlds,” feeling at home neither in their local situation nor in the global context (for an illustrative example, see Van Meijl, 2006, who described the identity confusion of Maori youngsters in New Zealand).

Hierarchical Position Repertoires

Not surprisingly, identity confusion, and its implied uncertainty, increases the need for clarity, purpose, and direction in life. As a protection, or even defense, against the multiplicity of voices on the global–local interface, people retreat to social groups or traditions that liberate them from the multiplicity of voices that may end up in a confusing cacophony. An illustrative example may be found in fundamentalist movements or orthodox religions. In a study of Jewish orthodoxy, Kaufman (1991) was interested in women who grew up in secular Jewish homes in the United States but felt after some time that the secular values of their education did not give them sufficient foundation for finding their direction in life. They converted, in their teens or twenties, to Orthodox Judaism despite the restrictions that traditional beliefs place on women. They arrived at this turning point in the conviction that the orthodox religion helped them to find a meaningful place in the world and made them feel rooted in a long, durable tradition.

In an analysis of the emergence of fundamentalist movements in Western and non-Western societies, Arnett (2002) discussed Kaufman’s study in the broader context of globalization. He argued that many of these movements emerged in the late twentieth century as a reaction to the changes caused by globalization. Indeed, for a considerable part, the upsurge of these movements can be seen as localizing counter-forces to the process of globalization. They lead to a stabilized and tightly organized position repertoire that is based on a belief in a sacred past, a social hierarchy of authority of men over women, adults over children, and God over all (Arnett, 2002 ; Marty & Appleby, 1993).

On the interface of self and society, it may be clarifying to make a distinction between two kinds of organization of the self, a vertical and a horizontal one. Communication lines in a vertical organization are going top-down or bottom up. The position at the top of the pyramid determines the course of action and spreads its demands or decisions to the repertoire as a whole. The lower positions have to conform to the demands of the higher position,

which takes responsibility for the self as a whole. The lower positions, in their turn, report their experiences to the position in authority, which then checks if the lower ones are in agreement or disagreement with the directives coming from the higher level. If they are not in agreement, the higher position gives top-down messages to make the lower ones adapt to the guidelines of the higher position. In a horizontal organization of the self, on the contrary, there is no top position that organizes all other positions from a totalizing or unifying point of view. Rather, the different positions have a certain degree of autonomy that enables them to communicate with other positions from their own specific point of view and to take their own wishes and needs into account. They have a certain freedom to create new combinations and coalitions in direct interchange with each other. Whereas vertically organized selves make movements from the top to the bottom and back, horizontally organized selves have space to make movements to different *sides*, that is, they directly address other positions in the self with the possibility of innovative interchanges and decision making.

The vertical and horizontal types of organization are also reflected in the ways in which selves interact with other selves as part of the larger society. Vertically organized selves may create new communities or participate in existing ones on the basis of commonalities in the top position (“We all believe in the same God” or “We all believe in the ideals of the same leader”). This top position is shared by all adherents of the same social or religious movement with the simultaneous existence of sharp boundaries between their own institutions and those that share a different top position (in case of a different religion, political conviction, or ideological belief). Selves that are organized in horizontal ways have more openness for responding to the selves of other people on the basis of the needs of a variety of positions. They can, for example, create communities that are liberated from the constraints of the dictates of the top positions in the self and they can do so on the basis of their social preferences, sexual orientations, gender ideals, physical needs, and political preferences without the forced coherence originating from any top position. Whereas the vertically organized self, with its centralized power structure, shows similarities to an authoritarian state (Greenwald, 1980), the horizontally organized self, with its decentralized power structure, resembles a democratic state. Like in a democratic society or institution, the horizontally structured self has, more than the vertically structured self, space for dialogical relationships both within the self and between different selves.

Two remarks have to be added to the proposed distinction between two kinds of organization of the self. The first one is that social power and

dominance are never absent, neither in society nor in the self, as we have argued earlier in this chapter. When different positions in the self meet each other, there is always a certain degree of asymmetry as the one position has knowledge that the other position does not have or one position has a more established place and, as a consequence, has a more authoritative (rather than authoritarian) say in the community of voices in the self (Stiles, 1999). Second, the distinction is an ideal-typical construction. In everyday life, there exist many mixtures of the two forms of organization. For example, many institutions that call themselves “democratic” may actively foster the creativity and responsibility of their employees by celebrating the ideology of a flat organization structure. However, at the same time, financial or economic problems may force them to take top-down decisions that run contrary to the needs or interests of many of their employees. Or, to remain closer to the self, a person may have learned to listen carefully to the needs of the various positions in his own self, but nevertheless finds it necessary to be “strong” when his survival is at stake, thereby overruling other positions and their specific needs.

HOW CAN THE SELF BE CONTINUOUS IN A DISCONTINUOUS SOCIETY?

The increasing frequency of border-crossings, contacts, and clashes between cultural groups, immigration waves, and the emergence of diasporas creates an increasing discontinuity in the self as part of a changing society. The self, however, is not only a reflection of developments and changes in society, but also *responds* to them from an agentic point of view (Falmagne, 2004). It is challenged to give an answer to a situation that, in one way or another, is disorganizing existing social patterns and traditional ways of interaction.

From a theoretical point of view, it should be emphasized that the self is not only *positioned*, that is, subjected to social and societal changes, but also involved in an active process of *positioning* and *counter-positioning*. These processes do not take place in a totally free space but are driven by basic motives or needs. An example of a Pakistani family (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007) may serve as an illustration of the relevance of “motivated positioning.”

A Pakistani family that emigrated to England is still attached to its original cultural background and deeply affected by the fact they are not accepted for whom they are by the dominant communities in the host country. The collective voice of the majority culture is critical and urges them to

assimilate. At the same time, however, there is an inner voice, deeply rooted in the collective voices of their original culture, that motivates them to stay faithful to their origin. This traditional voice is supported and fed by the stories, myths, and autobiographical memories associated with their attachment history. Their original culture gives them security and certainty of affective belonging. In this field of tension, they must find a way to negotiate between their wish to be accepted by the host culture and their adherence to their original culture. They are forced to negotiate among the several contrasting voices to find a dialogical solution.

Securitizing Subjectivity

The example in the preceding section illustrates the process of globalization as creating new and intense fields of tensions between global and local positions, resulting in differences, conflicts, and oppositions between voices. To arrive at workable solutions, these voices require dialogical interchanges both within and between different selves. At the interface of differing and opposing voices, biological survival needs are at stake. When these needs are frustrated, they restrict the flexibility of the self and make it defensive, as such needs have a strong urgency and tend to dominate the position repertoire as a whole. Such restricting reactions actually take place not only in immigrants but also in representatives of the host cultures when they feel overwhelmed by “intruders.”

The motivated nature of the process of positioning, and its dialogical and monological manifestations, is particularly prominent when globalization brings people into situations in which their needs for safety, security, and certainty are challenged. This idea is central in the notion of “securitizing subjectivity” as proposed by Kinnvall and Linden (2010). These authors observe that in situations of ontological insecurity, attempts are made to securitize subjectivity, pressed in an intensified search for one stable, strictly demarcated, and essentialized identity. Securitizing subjectivity is manifested in black-and-white categorizations, totalizing forms of thinking, and religious or secular modes of fundamentalism. It is also expressed in psychic rigidity, such as intolerance for ambiguity and a rejection of an artistic way of looking at reality. Securitizing subjectivity strives for the certainty that there is coherence and stability in a world that is otherwise fragmenting and threatening. In insecure social situations, people tend to retreat to familiar symbols offered by nation, religion, and gender. In some cases, the need for roots and certainty finds expression in a retreat to a mythical past (Kinnvall and Linden, 2010).

The Creation of Continuity by a Multivoiced Dialogical Self

How does the self, on the interface of globalization and localization, respond to experiences of increased discontinuity? We can search for an answer to this question by looking how persons organize or reorganize their position repertoire in specific situations of discontinuity or disorganization. An illustrative example is the case of rapid immigration to Ireland some years ago. As O'Sullivan-Lago and de Abreu (2010) describe, Ireland is traditionally a country of mass emigration but a dramatic change occurred in 1995 when the country became economically more prosperous. Statistics show that no European country had immigration figures that paralleled those of Ireland. The authors note that, as a result of the sudden increase in immigration and resulting local visibility of other cultures and ethnic groups, the previously more homogeneous country was subjected to cultural change on a grand scale. In this particular situation, the investigators explored, in a number of case studies, how the selves of representatives of the host culture responded to the changes on the societal level. They found that their subjects responded to these changes with a set of contrasting *I*-positions that in their combination seem at first sight "illogical" but at closer scrutiny appear to be a highly meaningful response to a discontinuous situation. One position was *I as a good person*, which figured as a specific and exclusively Irish cultural stance. This position emphasized the respondents' national identity as being Irish, and the differences brought in by the cultural other were seen as negative and even abnormal. Surprisingly, the same subjects responded with another position that was labeled as *I as human being*, which expressed their view of basic human equality. This was a culture-transcendent identity referring to the fact that people of different cultures belong to the same humanity. Finally, the subjects introduced the position *We as similar*, which was instigated by the necessity to include and integrate cultural others in the future of Ireland, with reference to their possession of similar traits (e.g., both groups were seen as hardworking).

The three *I*-positions show how the dialogical self negotiates its developmental trajectories in times of rupture and social change. These changes rendered traditional cultural *I*-positions unstable and prompted the need to develop future-viable positions to replace them. It seems that the basic structure of the new combination of positions can be summarized in this way: "I'm Irish and they are not, but they will be here in the future, so we have to live with them in one way or another." In this way they developed a dialogical identification strategy that offered them "continuity repair," as the authors call it. Interesting enough, the adaptive construction sounds

contradictory: whereas “I as human being” and “we as similar” are connecting positions, “I as a good person” is rather separating. In their combination of connection and separation, the subjects developed a position repertoire that was at the same time adaptive and contradictory but served to create continuity in times of discontinuity, both at the individual and local level.

Acculturation Is Not Linear and Monotrajectory

Apparently, the process of globalization and its counter-force localization engender adaptive contradictions between cultural positions in self and identity. This is also evident in research by Bhatia (2007), who investigated the experiences of a group of Indian Americans as one of the fastest growing immigrant communities in the United States. More than previous generations, the members of these communities have a high degree of training as engineers, medical doctors, scientists, and university professors. Drawing on participant observation and in-depth interviews, the author found that these professionals function as respected members of American society, but at the same time feel that they are seen as racially different and as not “real Americans.” Like in O’Sullivan-Lago and de Abreu’s research, Bhatia’s subjects emphasized that they were not only different from but *also the same* as members of the American majority, referring to their individual merits as professionals and their successful integration in American society. Although they, and their children, all had experiences with racism, they emphasized that racism has not had an adverse effect on their work life. They seemed to simultaneously accept and reject their differences from the majority, being involved in a “double-voiced” dialogue between their individual voices and the majority’s dominant voice.

In contrast to universal models of acculturation in cross-cultural psychology, Bhatia argues that a dialogical view does not insist that conflicting positions or voices need to be replaced by harmonious ones. Apparently, conflicting or contradicting voices may form a useful combination that is helpful to give an adequate response to cultural situations of discontinuity. Moreover, on the basis of his results, Bhatia criticized mainstream theories of acculturation, which are based on the questionable assumption of mutually exclusive acculturation strategies implying that when people integrate, they are *not* marginalized, and when they are marginalized they are apparently not integrated. In contrast to this view, Bhatia argues that integration and marginalization may coexist in the same individuals and function as mutually complementing components of a successful cultural adaptation.

In the context of the present chapter, it is noteworthy to refer to the notion of power in American-Indian identities. Bhatia (2007) is well in agreement with Callero (2003) in emphasizing that the notion of social power is largely neglected in well-known psychological concepts, such as “bicultural competence” and “integration strategies,” which are based on the assumption that both host and immigrant cultures share equal status and power. Bhatia’s criticism is in line with Callero (2003) and Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010), who emphasize the existence of social struggle and dominance in acculturation processes. This perspective helps us to see how the processes of positioning and counter-positioning work on the interface of cultures and makes us understand “how immigrants living in postcolonial and diasporic locations are negotiating and reconciling conflicting histories and incompatible subject positions” (Bhatia, 2007, p. 233). At the contact zones between different cultures and traditions, we witness processes of positioning and counter-positioning that warrant the conclusion that the development of a contradictory or conflicting position repertoire is an intrinsic and adaptive feature of a healthy dialogical self. I suppose that, in times of complex and contradictive changes, people need complex and contradictive answers as an answer to disorganizing situations. [For a research project on adaptive dialogical counter-positions as a response to hegemonic masculinity as a form of culturally determined social power, see Kahn, Holmes, & Brett, 2011.]

THE CONTINUUM BETWEEN MONOLOGUE AND DIALOGUE

Because dialogical relationships do not develop in a social vacuum, but rather in situations of constraints, in this chapter I aimed to describe dialogical processes in the context of relationships of social power. Social differences, becoming directly manifest in a world of increasing intercultural connections, often lead to social power. As I have tried to demonstrate, power relationships, as forms of positioning, are reflected in the self and, at the same time, evoke its agentic response. However, power relationships may become so dominant in interactions that they prevent dialogical relationship to emerge. In such cases there is only one voice or a few voices that determine the course of the other positions that do not have the space and opportunity to act on the basis of their own preferences and needs. In such cases the interaction is more monological than dialogical. Given the role of social power and relative dominance between voices in the self that put, more or less, constraints on the dialogical self, we proposed the existence of a continuum between monologue and dialogue (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010).

At the conceptual level dialogue and monologue can be treated as qualitatively different. In the case of dialogue, the different voices not only have space to express their experiences and narratives, but also give space to the other voices who want to speak and express themselves from their particular point of view. Moreover, the voices are open to listen to the messages of the other voices and permit themselves to be influenced by them so that they are willing to adapt, change, or develop their original narrative or point of view as part of a shared exploration. In a monologue, on the contrary, one or a few voices dominate the other voices to such a degree that these voices do not receive opportunity to express themselves from their specific needs, experiences, and intentions. Moreover, the dominating voice is not willing to change its original point of view and to integrate elements of the messages of the counter-voice and is not open to constructing a common dialogical space.

Despite the existence of qualitative differences, the existence of mixtures of monologue and dialogue justify placing them on a continuum. Take, for example, two interacting participants who try to dominate each other or to “win” the discussion. They do not listen carefully to each other, are not aware of possible misunderstandings, and do not allow themselves to learn from their preceding interchange. In this case, the “exchange” moves to the monological end of the continuum. In contrast, the interchange moves to the dialogical end of the continuum when the participants are willing and able to listen to the other’s point of view, allow each other space to give expression to their own experiences, and are motivated to uncover possible misunderstandings and able and willing to correct them, so that they *learn* from each other on the basis of their preceding interchange, developed as a common enterprise.

Mixtures of Monologue and Dialogue

Because dialogue can be developed only in the context of differences in power and dominance, there are many situations in which the interchange shows a *mixture* of dialogical and monological elements. For example, one participant listens to the other party in an emphatic way and corrects or develops parts of his initial point of view on the basis of the preceding interchange and even shares this with the other. In the same discussion, however, the one participant neglects or even ignores other elements that are brought in by the other one, who then feels understood at some points but misunderstood at others.

Some forms of interaction can be placed somewhere in the middle of the continuum. In “persuasion,” for example, there is a clear dominance

of one party who tries convince the other party, but, at the same time, the addressed party has some space to agree or disagree or to reject the message altogether. This is different in the case of “command,” in which the other party is forced to comply and has no freedom of choice. Command and, even more, using violence, are forms of “interaction” that represent points at the monological end of the continuum.

Considering dialogue and monologue as variations on a continuum is in agreement with the positional nature of dialogical relationships. Some positions move the interchange to the monological end of the continuum, whereas others instigate it into a dialogical direction. For example, a teacher who evaluates the performance of his student at an examination does so on the basis of performance criteria and not on the basis of the wishes of the student. In doing so, he moves into the monological direction at the continuum. However, the position of “supervisor” gives, more than the “judging teacher,” opportunities to enter into a dialogue in which both parties share common insights and build on each other’s contributions during the interchange. At the same time, we may notice that a heterogeneity of positions leads to an increasing chance of misunderstandings or even conflicts when it is not clear to both parties from which position they are speaking in a particular situation and at a particular moment.

Friendship as the Other-in-the-Self

In agreement with James’s (1890) social self and Vygotski’s (1962) process of “interiorization,” we assume that significant others participate as “external positions” in an extended dialogical self (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010).³ A similar idea is proposed by Aron and colleagues (2005), who have formulated an inclusion-of-other-in-the-self model. The basic proposition in this model is that, in a close relationship with another person, one includes in one’s own self, to some degree, the other person’s perspectives, identities, and resources. For example, in psychological research it is well known that people recall past successes as more recent and past failures as more distant in time than they actually are. Elaborating on this finding, Konrath and Ross (2003) examined whether the same effect occurs when

³ Note that this process of extension of the self does not refute the existence of self–other boundaries. These (semipermeable) boundaries hold as long as the person is able to make a clear distinction between actual others and imagined or purely imaginary others.

people take the perspective of their romantic partners. As expected, the investigators found the same effect when their participants recalled past events for their romantic partners, but only in those cases in which the partners were felt as close, not when they were felt as distant.

In one of their studies, Aron and colleagues (2005) applied their model to prejudices toward out-groups, a topic that is particularly relevant in the present context because prejudices toward members of other cultural groups reflect rigidified monological relationships in the (extended) self. The investigators hypothesized that prejudice in intergroup contacts will be reduced when intimate contact with an out-group member is involved. Usually, people treat in-group members as parts of themselves and out-group members as not part of themselves. However, the question was posed: what happens when one develops a friendship with an out-group member? Aron *et al.* hypothesized that not only the particular out-group member (the friend) but also the out-group member's *group identity* become part of the self. In this way, they expected that it was possible to undermine negative out-group attitudes and prejudices. The investigators did so because they expected that it was possible to undermine, along this way, negative out-group attitudes and prejudices. On the basis of several studies, they concluded that there is support for the thesis that contact with a member of an out-group is more effective in reducing prejudice toward the out-group as a whole when one has a close relationship rather than a more distant one with a particular out-group member. Simply said, make one friend, and you start to like his whole group.

As we have argued earlier (Hermans & Konopka, 2010), research on friendship with out-group members opens a promising avenue for studies on the effects of globalization and localization. More in general, research on *I*-positions that have the potential to facilitate movements to the dialogical or monological end of the continuum are relevant because they not only give more insight into the dynamics of intergroup processes but also provide practical devices to create a more fertile and innovative contact between cultural groups and cultural positions in the self.

In the line of the reasoning in this chapter, I see an important question for future research. Given the increasing amount of contradictive tension in a globalizing society – both in the self and between individuals and groups – how much can this tension increase before resulting in a regressive movement to the monological end of the continuum? Or, how well developed is our tolerance of uncertainty to keep dialogue going? Such questions have direct implications for educational endeavors that aim to develop a “dialogical capacity.”

THE MULTIPLICITY OF CULTURAL POSITIONS: BETWEEN
SOCIAL PROXIMITY AND DISTANCE

Living in the compressed space of a globalizing world means that we are confronted with people from very different cultural origins, each with their particular historical background. Living in such a world creates a paradoxical situation: increasing *proximity* between cultural groups as a result of accelerated globalization coexists with increasing *distance* resulting from differences in social and cultural backgrounds. As I have argued in the present chapter, dialogue is needed to give an adequate response to this paradoxical situation. The increased compression makes that contact unavoidable; the existence of social and cultural differences implies that dialogical capacities are challenged to the utmost.

However, I propose a further step. Dialogue, or more precise, flexible movement on the dialogue–monologue continuum is needed not only between different individuals and groups; it is also a necessity in the self. As the self participates in a world of increasing complexity and highly visible differences, the self also becomes more complex and challenged by such differences. We have arrived in a situation in which cultures are no longer simply outside our national boundaries. As a result of international contacts, diaspora, immigration, and media exposure, these boundaries have become increasingly permeable. Stronger, and this is central in the present chapter, cultural differences exist *within* the self. As Pieterse (1995) said, hybridization of positions in the self can be seen as a major result of cultural connections that undermine the idea of cultures as internally homogeneous and externally distinctive. Intercultural processes lead to the recombination of existing forms and practices into new forms and practices. Hybrid phenomena result from the transformation of existing cultural practices into new ones. The process of hybridization may create such multiple identities as Mexican schoolgirls dressed in Greek togas dancing in the style of Isadora Duncan, a London boy of Asian origin playing for a local Bengali cricket team and at the same time supporting the Arsenal football club, Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, and Native Americans celebrating Mardi Gras in the United States. As these and other examples of intercultural contacts, reported earlier in this chapter, illustrate, different cultural positions in the self require dialogical relationships to keep them together as part of a coherent self that is able to give a meaningful response to changing cultural situations.

How appealing or suggestive the above example may be, it should not cover the important role of social power and dominance, which applies also to the lives of Native Americans and Mexican schoolgirls when they cross

the borders of their cultures. I intentionally placed the notion of social power central in this chapter to demonstrate that it always puts constraints to dialogue. Moreover, to know when and where dialogue “works,” and when and where it does not work, we have to be aware of its ever-present limitations. Therefore, I proposed the continuum of monologue and dialogue, which, by its attention to mixtures of both forms, shows that dialogue almost never exists in its pure form and that it is not always there.

Our analysis comes close to that of Bhatia (2010), who, after analyzing the narratives of Indian diaspora, concluded that we have to attend to issues of race, gender, and power status of immigrants both before and after migration to the host country. He adds an important message:

Contemporary global movements and globalization impulses (variously motivated) force us to abandon seamless conceptions of similarities and differences between national cultures in favour of hybridized, diasporized and heterogeneous notions of culture [...]. In other words, “culture” – however we wish to understand it – cannot be understood as contained and circumscribed by national boundaries. To posit such static, immovable, immutable constructions of culture is a convenient fiction... (Bhatia, 2010, p. 221)

As the consequence of a globalizing world, cultures have not only frequently and massively crossed national boundaries, but they also have crossed the boundaries between society and self. Not only has the globalizing world created many contact zones between different cultural groups, but it also leads to an increasing multiplicity of cultural positions in the self. Not only the globalizing world, but also the self needs dialogue to create meaningful and innovative relationships between the diversity of cultural positions by which it is increasingly populated.

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